

THE HYOGO FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION 2005-2015

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ABSTRACT

The continuous and increasing number of disasters made the international community to adopt the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), in the year 2005, with a plan of action for ten years. The HFA had primary objectives of disaster risk reduction by proper and accurate disaster monitoring, prediction and early warnings; at different levels, e.g. local, national etc. Further, it aimed at increasing disaster preparedness and reducing other underlying risks. With these objectives, the HFA was in force for a term of ten years. Despite the objectives, there remained a few flaws with the HFA, mostly in areas of cooperation, coordination and implementation.

In this research work, the researcher shall look into the HFA in detail, wherein the strengths and weaknesses of the same would be analysed. Further, the outcomes of the plan of action would also be reviewed and the strategies adopted subsequently due to its pitfalls, shall also be discussed.

The researcher would base the work on previously published data by different national and international organizations, civil societies, NGOs etc., and hence it would be purely doctrinal in nature. The work would be in the nature of a critical analysis of the HFA.

KEYWORDS: RISK REDUCTION, DISASTER MONITORING, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

Hyogo Framework of Action is the world's first strategic plan to provide a multi-sectoral action plan with actors working on disaster risk reduction. HFA's Priority Action 3 seeks to call on the national governments and all other bodies, including the international organizations across the globe, such that they can use their knowledge, innovative techniques, technological knowhow and educational skills to build a culture of safety and resilience at various levels.¹ There have been various studies which reflect that only a few steps have been

¹Available at: s3.amazonaws.com.

taken towards proper teaching and training of various professionals, including that in policy-making; in the areas of disaster risk reduction. The lack of inclusion of such training and essential education in this area, in the regular academic curriculum has created numerous problems, wherein neither is the general public nor are the professionals equipped to deal or tackle with the disasters or mitigate their risks effectively. Further, those who get trained lack practical exposure and hands-on experience which further complicates the problem.

Due to the lack of proper education and training in this regard, the ten year framework has not been greatly successful; as there remained a major fallacy in its implementation mechanism. Research also suggests that the inclusion of disaster management studies and disaster risk reduction into the educational curriculum would make the students future-ready professionals, who can tackle and handle the situations during a disaster in a better way; by understanding the nuances so related and the outcomes so flowing out of it. The Hyogo framework provided for an understanding of the existing gaps in information, innovation, education and training which made disaster risk reduction, more disastrous and proposed to solve these issues by including disaster management studies at various levels of the academic curriculum.

THE MAKING OF THE HYOGO FRAMEWORK

The numbers of deaths reported due to various kinds of disasters- both natural and manmade have been high in the previous decades. In the last one decade, the number of deaths due to disasters have been declining significantly, but what must not be lost sight of is that disasters have left many people, 'affected' very badly; many lost their houses, property, etc., and had to migrate to different places. Many others were so badly affected on health or monetary fronts that complete rehabilitation of each disaster stricken person was near impossible for the nations to carry out.

Statistics reveal that the number of people affected by disasters, have increased rapidly by almost three times in the past few decades.² It further reveals that the world has witnessed a monetary damage of around \$ 660 billion due to various disasters and more than half of such damage has happened in Asia itself.³ Most of the disasters have been taking place due to the ever-occurring and continuous phenomenon of 'climate change'. And given the alarming rate

²Available at: <http://www.unisdr.org/>.

³Ibid.

at which the world is witnessing this phenomenon; more disasters are likely to happen and continue for a long time into the 21st century as well.⁴ Thus, steps must not only be taken towards reduction or control of climate change; but disaster preparedness must also be taking place on war-footing.

Disasters lead to the emergence of such situations that threaten development, at all the levels, i.e., local, national and international. Due to such hindrance, the Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved satisfactorily. Not only do disasters pose a threat to human life and property in specific and development in general; but also it takes away all efforts made towards development to a negative. Due to the negative development caused by the disasters, the most affected nations are the ones with low development and low income. In most cases, these underdeveloped nations remain irreversibly affected by the disasters; thus increasing human vulnerability and threatening human development.

The world conference on disaster reduction (hereinafter WCDR) held in Kobe, Japan in the year 2005⁵ was held, wherein the Yokohama Review was submitted and it further led to the formation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. The framework was formed with a view to “substantially reduce the number of losses in life and the social, economic and environmental assets of the communities and countries owing to disasters.”⁶ For the fulfillment of the main objective; it sought to implement strategies for the same, which are:

- The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction⁷;
- The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms, and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards⁸;
- The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery programs in the reconstruction of affected communities.⁹

⁴Ibid.

⁵HYOGO FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION 2005-2015 Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters MID-TERM REVIEW 2010-2011 by the United Nations.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

Apart from the objective and the strategies; it also identified five priorities for its plan of action, namely;

1. Ensuring disaster risk reduction is a national and regional priority on a strong institutional basis: Countries that develop policy, legislative and institutional frameworks for disaster risk reduction and that are able to develop and track progress through specific and measurable indicators have greater capacity to manage risks and to achieve widespread consensus for, engagement in and compliance with disaster risk reduction measures across all sectors of society.¹⁰
2. Identifying, assessing and monitoring risks and improving early warning: The starting point for reducing disaster risk and for promoting a culture of disaster resilience lies in the knowledge of the hazards and the physical, social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities to disasters that most societies face, and of the ways in which hazards and vulnerabilities are changing in the short and long term, followed by action taken on the basis of that knowledge.¹¹
3. Using knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels: Disasters can be substantially reduced if people are well informed and motivated towards a culture of disaster prevention and resilience, which in turn requires the collection, compilation and dissemination of relevant knowledge and information on hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities.¹²
4. Minimizing hazardous substances: Disaster risks related to changing social, economic, environmental conditions and land use, and the impact of hazards associated with geological events, weather, water, climate variability and climate change are addressed in sector development planning and programmes as well as in post-disaster situations.¹³
5. Strengthening disaster preparedness so that the public could respond effectively at all levels: At times of disaster, impacts and losses can be substantially reduced if authorities, individuals and communities in hazard-prone areas are well prepared and

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Available at: <https://www.bestcurrentaffairs.com/hyogo-framework-action-building-resilience-disasters/>.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

ready to act and are equipped with the knowledge and capacities for effective disaster management.¹⁴

ROLE OF THE IFRC

The purpose of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is to “improve the lives of vulnerable people by promoting human rights”.¹⁵ It strongly believes that disasters pose a major risk to human development, undermine progress, affect and hamper human rights and contribute towards poverty; as the poor are the ones who are the most vulnerable to the disasters.

Thus, it reaches out to the aid of people in times of local hazards, by a ten year strategy which has the following basic functional areas:

- promoting basic principles and social values.¹⁶
- disaster response.¹⁷
- disaster preparedness.¹⁸
- health and social care.

In its 28th conference, it specifically adopted the “Agenda For Humanitarian Action; wherein it recognized the importance of disaster risk reduction and adopted measures for the reduction of risks due to disasters, mainly the impacts suffered by the vulnerable groups of people”. In view of this stance, the IFRC fully supports the Hyogo Framework of Action, acknowledging its importance and urges the national governments, civil societies, donors and international bodies to work towards it, either independently or closely with it.

The WCDR held in the year 2005 in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan; adopted the Hyogo Action Plan 2005-2015. “The conference provided a unique opportunity to promote a systematic approach towards disaster management and risk reduction. It emphasized the need for the same and also identified ways for building resilience for nations and communities in disasters.”

The adoption and implementation of the HFA marked a milestone in highlighting the national and local efforts for disaster risk reduction and in strengthening international co-operation through the development of regional strategies, programs and policies. HFA has made significant progress in developing institutional, policy and disaster risk reduction legislation.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Available at: <https://www.ifrc.org/Global/hyogo-framework-federation-en.pdf>.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

Participants at all levels strengthened their capacity for risk assessment and identification, disaster preparedness, response and early warning. However, advances in basic management of disaster drivers have been limited to many countries. In general, institutional, legal and policy structures have not done enough to integrate disaster risk considerations into development decisions. As a result, exposure to risks in both high and low income countries increased rapidly; rather than decreasing the already existing ones. At the end of the timeline for implementation of the HFA framework, nations clearly realized the efforts made didn't produce the desired result of risk reduction either in terms of decrease in economic losses of the direct impacts on human beings. They concluded that the focus of national and international attention should be on protecting social and economic development from external shocks, transforming growth and development to manage risk, in a holistic manner.¹⁹ This conclusion forms the basis for the development of the Sendai framework, the HFA compliance tool, adopted in 2015. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Management 2015-2030 is a series of tools adopted as a result of the Hyogo Framework; such that the principal areas of work identified under the HFA can be properly worked upon. It is a permanent agreement and the member countries will have to ratify and accordingly comply to it, voluntarily.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HYOGO FRAMEWORK

Disaster management is such an area, that it cannot be dealt independently by a community or a nation. Rather, various stakeholders must come together to ensure proper disaster management and it must take place at all levels so that development is not impaired on the totality. Thus, it is not the duty of the nations alone to get the HFA implemented. Rather, nation-states, international bodies, regional bodies, international institutions etc.²⁰, have to work in a coordinated manner. Further, civil societies and volunteer groups can also participate and help the nations implement the HFA. The private entities, like companies also have a major role to play.²¹ They can help the society in times of need as a good gesture or under their corporate social responsibility. Finally, media is one of the most important

¹⁹Synthesis report on the consultation on the 2015 disaster risk reduction framework (HFA2).

²⁰Available at: https://www.unisdr.org/files/1217_HFAbrochureEnglish.pdf.

²¹Ibid.

stakeholders²² in disaster management and risk reduction; because in times of disaster, news acts a major disaster, adding on to the distress of people. Though the stakeholders must work together; certain division of responsibilities is important to ensure smooth functioning and proper risk reduction and rehabilitation in times of a disaster.

Responsibility of the nations:

- The nations are required to develop systems of coordination such that all the stakeholders work together and not in exclusion of one another.
- They must engage in conducting proper assessments to find the actual status of disaster risk reduction.
- They must invest in creating public awareness about disaster management and risk reduction and shall publish the data relating to the national programmes conducted in that regard.
- They must review the national progress towards the achievement of the objectives laid out in the HFA.²³
- They should work towards the proper and effective implementation of the international frameworks and instruments in place.
- They should integrate disaster risk reduction with climate change strategies and take steps to ensure that these problems are effectively tackled in a coordinated way.

Responsibility of the regional organizations:²⁴

- They must promote and conduct regional programmes on disaster risk reduction.
- They must carry out baseline assessments in the particular regions and sub-regions there under.
- They must review the steps taken towards DRR and the progress made in the direction of implementation of the Hyogo framework.
- They should work towards the creation of regional collaborative centres and should support the governments and private agencies or bodies for development of early warning systems in the region.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

- They must also share information, technological know-how etc to ensure reduced disaster risk.

Responsibilities of the international organizations:²⁵

- The international organizations work towards human development on various fronts; thus it becomes their duty to ensure disaster risk reduction by implementing ideas with respect to the same while formulation of policies, programs, frameworks and such other international legal instruments.
- The United Nations Organisation and all its allied agencies must be supported and strengthened such that they can provide assistance to nations or areas affected by disasters and initiatives for disaster risk reduction can be taken therein.
- They must collect information and compile them in a database, such that the data may be used for purposes of forecasting as well as research and development.
- Development of early warning systems and exchange of information.
- Aid and advice should be granted to the nations, such that they could develop or avail the technological know-how such that they could also reduce the risks due to disasters on their own level.
- Assistance must be provided to all the nations unconditionally, such that their systems for disaster management and capacity building could be strengthened.

INDIA AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HYOGO FRAMEWORK OF ACTION

India, owing to its varied physiographic features experiences different kinds of climatic conditions; each of which causes a separate kind of problem; e.g. coastal areas suffer cyclones and tsunamis²⁶; mountainous and hilly areas experience cloud bursts, flash-floods, landslides etc.; arid and semi-arid areas experience drought²⁷; riverine areas suffer due to floods²⁸ etc., to name a few. India has been witnessing various kinds of problems due to its

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Strengthening disaster risk management in India: A review of five state disaster management plans, by Aditya Bahadur, Emma Lovell and Florence Pichon (July 2016). Available at: <http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/files/file/Strengthening%20disaster%20risk%20management%20in%20India.pdf>.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

varied climatic conditions and disasters are nothing new to India. India has witnessed many disasters simultaneously occurring at various places. From the year 2002 to 2013; India was one of the five nations which got frequently affected by natural disasters.²⁹

To tackle with these disasters, as per the objectives and strategies outlined under the Hyogo framework, the Government of India enacted the National Disaster Management Act, 2005 and created a National Disaster Management Authority as an institutional framework for the robust implementation of policies for effective disaster management and risk reduction.³⁰ Further, state authorities for disaster management have also been created to ensure better compliance and implementation of the laws.³¹ To strengthen the institutional framework, the districts have also been vested with disaster management authorities with the District Magistrate or Collector as its head³²; who shall overlook the implementation of the Act; take steps towards risk reduction and disaster mitigation in the district. Due to the creation of the hierarchy under the Act; the implementation becomes easier; which is a progressive step towards achievement of the objective of the Hyogo Framework of Action.

The Act and the Authorities created there under have worked towards disaster management and risk reduction to a considerable extent; and one major example in this regard is the situation during cyclones in the State of Odisha. In 1999, the east coast of the state of Odisha was battered by the super-cyclone; which caused the death of around 10,000 people. Later on, in the year 2013; the coast of the state was again faced with the cyclone Phailin. But during Phailin, there was hardly any fatality; all thanks to the enhanced and better systems for disaster management. The cyclone was predicted beforehand and accordingly the people from low-lying areas were evacuated to safer places and cyclone shelters. Later, after the cyclonic conditions subsided, they were rehabilitated. This shows that disaster preparedness can lead to risk reduction, wherein steps can be taken towards ensuring safety of the human life, animal life, property to whatever extent possible, etc.

Despite the disaster preparedness which has been observed in India, in the past decade which has saved the lives of many; there still remains room for better disaster resilience. India must work towards research and development in the area of disaster management;

²⁹Guha-Sapir, D., Hoyois, P. and Below, R. (2014) Annual disaster statistical review 2013: The numbers and trends. Brussels: Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters. Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/annual-disaster-statistical-review2013-numbers-and-trends>.

³⁰Available at: <https://www.drishtiiias.com/to-the-points/paper3/disaster-management-ii>.

³¹Supra 26.

³²Supra 30.

developing the technological know-how etc., and must partner with other nations, both in the region and outside for exchange of data such that we can further risk reduction in a better manner.

THE WAY FORWARD

Disasters have been faced by the world since the dawn of human history and its mitigation has gained importance over the time. The approach towards disasters is that it is an emergency situation, which needs to be tackled effectively until the situation or the problem subsides. Due to this, there is a lack of an inherent system for disaster management. Therefore, there is a need to promote a culture of prevention and to identify key issues that need to be addressed, especially in the development process. Further, a forward looking approach for disaster management must be carved out to deliver people-centric development. People should be made a part of the system of disaster management, and must be taught about the techniques for helping themselves and others during a disaster. This would ensure their safety in face of a disaster, until governmental support arrives. Proper and resilient infrastructure must be developed to ensure safety of the public. Post-disaster rehabilitation must be effective by providing not only food and other facilities for a few days; but also by providing them with adequate resources for proper mitigation of the risk due to the disaster. The local governments must be rapid in their functioning and must adopt practices which would make the communities resilient by decreasing their vulnerability.

Disaster Management must embark on a comprehensive human development strategy to integrate sustainable development goals, policies and practices that strengthen human capacity instead of vulnerabilities.

Though the Hyogo Framework's timeline has expired; its ideas continue to live through the Sendai Framework, the Paris Conference of Parties etc., and hence steps must be taken to ensure that these ideals get fulfilled both on the national and international front.